The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

# AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.—Matthew.

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## WASTE IN INDUSTRY EXACTS HEAVY TOLL

In view of recent developments, is it not time to cease talking of the need for labor to produce more?

The implication is that labor "shirks on the job" and that increased wages can only come if labor "produces a fair day's work."

Parallel with this claim, the fear of overproduction and glutted markets is ever before those who would libel the workers.

By what logic can it be said that labor shirks and at the same time fear the consequences of full-time plant capacity?

On every hand observing men agree that the capacity of our national production machine exceeds the demand.

Secretary of Labor Davis gave governmental approval to this claim in his last annual report when he said that one problem of unemployment "is the present overdeveloped state of some of our larger industries."

**"Our production machinery and equipment in many of these industries can not run 300 days in the year without producing a stock that can not be sold in this country nor in any or all other countries."**

The Wall Street Journal, representative financial paper, took the same position in its September 1, 1925, issue:

**"The country today can turn out more steel, more coal, more copper, more oil, more automobiles, etc., than the demand calls for. If all of these industries permitted capacity operation, prosperity would be short lived."**

The Magazine of Wall Street, January 2, 1926, issue, is more cautious in presenting the same view:

**"* * * we have not yet overcome the initial handicap of an over-extended plant capacity which makes it difficult for us to operate our industries at a continuing high level."**

These views are no longer matters of dispute. They may be ignored, but they can not be denied.

They are known to business men who are organizing so-called "open price" associations. These are intended to stabilize industry—to produce only what the market requires rather than manufacture a surplus with cost prices marked off in the lean years.

Despite this nation's marvelous production powers, preventable waste and loss of life are beyond computation.

It is this waste that labor would check. Every item in the long list mounts into millions upon millions of dollars. The more prominent are: Fatalities and accidents, unemployment, preventable sickness, occupational disease, labor turnover and fatigue because of long hours.

These are exclusive of wastes that Herbert Hoover, committee of industrial engineers uncovered a few years ago.

The boasted "hard-headed business man" is all that when he ignores this waste.

It workers were permitted to have a voice in industry they could join their experience with the skill of industrial and hygienic engineers, chemists and other scientists.

These combined forces could protect life, lengthen man's productive powers and reduce to a minimum all manner of waste.

But the "hard-headed business man" insists on "running his own business," while claiming that he serves the public.

The waste in industry that he is responsible for makes his "service" an appalling tax that the people must pay.

Can he continue to fool the public by continuing this useless cost, while he insists that "labor must produce more"?

## TARIFF BOARD FAILS IN SCIENTIFIC PLAN

Washington, Jan. 9.—The Federal Tariff Commission is the latest government board to be placed on the grill, and its methods are due for discussion in congress.

The commission was created under the Harding administration, when the Fordney-McCumber tariff bill was passed. At that time it was haled as the last word in legislation. It empowered the commission to investigate claims that a tariff rate is too high or too low and the president could then change that particular schedule on recommendation of the commission. This method, it was claimed, would put tariff making on a scientific basis and would remove the question from the field of politics.

The theory has not proved practical, according to opponents of the commission, who charge that it has been "packed" in the interest of manufacturers.

Alfred P. Dennis of Maryland, a member of the commission, said that in the dozen cases finally disposed of by the commission a lower duty has been favored in but a single individual case.

"That," said Mr. Dennis, "was the more or less amazing case of quail imported from Mexico for breeding purposes."

Senator Norris said that the commission "has been converted and packed like other commissions of the federal government."

Instead of being a nonpartisan body," he said, "it is being used as a partisan weapon to get high tariff rates."

### STATE UNIONS TO MEET

Jackson, Mich., Jan. 9.—The annual convention of the Michigan state federation of labor will convene in this city Tuesday, February 2.

## LABOR URGED TO GET EARLY START IN LAUNCHING NO-PARTY CAMPAIGN

Washington, Jan. 9.—State and central bodies and local unions are urged to appoint nonpartisan political campaign committees by William Green, chairman of the A. F. of L. National Non-Partisan Political Campaign Committee. This committee was appointed by the A. F. of L. executive council to carry out the non-partisan political policy of organized labor.

"The insidious campaign now being carried on to discredit forward-looking members of congress makes it imperative that organized wage earners and sympathizers make every preparation now for an aggressive part in the state primaries and in the elections in November, 1926," said Mr. Green.

"Labor has a duty to perform. Members of congress must be elected who will rise above party and who will talk and vote for measures that will be beneficial to the people generally.

"The usual vicious measures have been introduced and may be given hearings by the sixty-ninth congress. A number of measures favorable to labor and the people have been introduced but may never see the light of day.

"The great crime against the textile workers may be thrashed out on the floor of the senate and house, but no action will be taken by the reactionaries for fear of arousing opposition of the great textile interests.

"A number of state legislatures will be in session this winter and the legislative committees of federations and of city central bodies may secure information regarding candidates for congress and state legislatures.

"Vigorous campaigns should be launched that the rank and file and the people generally will be made acquainted with the records of candidates, especially in the primaries.

"Every state federation of labor, every city central body and every local union should appoint non-partisan political campaign committees. Where these organizations have legislative committees, they should automatically become non-partisan political campaign committees.

"Mass meetings should be held.

"The campaign should not be confined to organized wage earners, but should be extended to the farmers and others, that the truth may be clearly set forth in the election of officials who will be true to the people.

"Personal prejudice should be swept aside in this great cause. No one should be voted for whose record shows that he cares nothing for the people."

## STATE'S "CURRENT WAGE" LAW SET ASIDE BY SUPREME COURT

Washington, Jan. 9.—The United States supreme court has set aside an Oklahoma law which provides that contractors on state work shall pay the "current rate of wages" that prevails in the locality where the work was being performed.

The case revolved around the right of a construction company to pay $3.20 a day in a locality where the current rate was $3.60 a day. Oklahoma authorities sought to enjoin the company and the latter challenged the law's validity.

The supreme court held that the current wage provision presented a double uncertainty "fatal to its validity as a criminal statute." The court said that the law, in attempting to prescribe wages, did not take into consideration the amount of work done, the efficiency of workmen and other considerations, and that interpretation of the words "current rate of wages" depended, in the main, upon the probable "varying expressions" of juries in different localities.

## SEAMEN'S SAFETY ACT UPHELD; LABOR MAY ENFORCE STATUTE

Washington, Jan. 9.—The United States supreme court has upheld section 2 of the seamen's act which provides that a ship's sailors (the men on deck) must be divided into at least two watches, and firemen, oilers and watertenders into at least three watches, these to be on duty successively.

The decision reverses two lower federal courts which ruled that a seaman was guilty of desertion if he left a vessel that did not observe the law.

**Prior to the passage of the law shipowners operated their vessels at night with one or two seamen and an officer on deck. Shipowners would risk danger at night, because they are protected by insurance and limited liability. This permitted the crew to be worked in the day time.**

Recognizing that this system menaced life and property, congress provided that a portion of the crew must be on deck all the time, ready to obey orders. To enforce the law, congress further provided that a violation would nullify the shipping contract between the vessel and workers.

The law was disregarded and it was years before any seamen undertook to enforce the penalty by leaving the vessel. When they did the San Francisco federal district court held that the law was passed to protect the seamen against overwork and that they were deserters when they left a vessel because the law was not obeyed. The federal court of appeals sustained this position, which is now reversed by the supreme court.

"The refusal of shipowners to properly man their vessels at night indicates what little regard they have for safety at sea," said Andrew Furuseth, president of the International Seamen's union.

"A freighter sailing in dark, foggy or stormy weather with an inefficient, or no, lookout, endangers other vessels. She may collide with a passenger vessel and cause the death of men, women and children.

"These shipowners are not interested in safety. They are protected from damages because of loss of life by limited liability, and the loss of their vessel is protected by insurance. This means that the risks are turned over to the community while the shipowners take a chance of letting the seamen sleep at night that they may be worked in day time.

"The supreme court's decision will force shipowners to divide their crew into watches, which will protect the ship, and other ships, as well."

## *Labor Would End Injunction Evil; Growing Equity Power Is Menace*

Washington, Jan. 9.—Labor is determined to abolish the labor injunction evil, says President Green, in a leading editorial on this subject in the American Federationist, current issue. This question will have priority in labor's program the coming year.

"At no time in its history," says Mr. Green, "has the A. F. of L. been studying with greater concern the problem of finding a legislative method to wipe out misuse of this process.

**"After experimenting with efforts to define conditions under which injunctions might not be issued, the executive council recommended to the Atlantic City convention the following legislative method: That the field of industrial relations be specifically excluded from equity jurisdiction and that all legal questions arising from such causes be referred to courts of law for hearing and necessary redress."**

President Green says every effort has failed to define terms and conditions which should apply to industrial relations, and to check judges from exercising their discretion in extending equity power to the industrial field.

With the extension of this power and the building up of irresponsible equity law, which influences other courts, the situation constitutes a menace not only to labor, but to the principle of government by law, said President Green.

"All federal courts except the supreme court are constituted under legislation enacted by congress. Congress has the right and the duty to amend or modify that legislation in the light of experience. A similar situation holds with reference to state courts.

"Labor, therefore, proposes limitation of equity jurisdiction to the determination and protection of such intangible properties and to questions arising therefrom, and that all other judicial questions, especially all those pertaining to contracts of employment, individual or collective, or arising out of industrial relations, shall be confined exclusively to law courts.

"A conspicuous example of why labor makes this proposal is the situation in West Virginia. The equity courts of that state treat the miners' unions as illegal combinations and forbid organizing work and other normal functions of a union. The courts have sought to prevent collective action on the part of the miners at a time when important industrial issues are in the making.

"Trade unionists want to be free from the tyranny of judicial discretion.

"We are determined to be free from injustice through the abuse of the injunction writ.

## UNION EDUCATION TO AFFECT SOCIETY

Evanston, Ill., Jan. 9.—Trade union education was praised by Rev. Burt Roy, of Rock Springs, Wyo., at an interdenominational conference of several hundred churchmen and Bible students.

"In an unprejudiced," said the clergyman, "the largest single hope for a new social order rests not on students' conferences, but in workers' educational bureaus fostered by the American Federation of Labor."

Rev. Ernest Fremont Tittel of this city urged his hearers to act on the great questions of the day.

"Saving starving babies is a good thing," said Rev. Harold Ehrensberger, also of this city, "but a better thing is to find the causes for juvenile delinquency, instead of trying to save the delinquents after their habits have been formed. We must face the situation as it is, not rescue the perishing after they have perished."

## FAVOR SHOALS LEASE

Washington, Jan. 9.—The house rules committee has approved a resolution to create a joint congressional committee to negotiate for the leasing of the government's Muscle Shoals properties. Leases will be limited to 50 years.

The last congress rejected Senator Underwood's proposal that Muscle Shoals be turned over to private interests. A committee was appointed by the president to investigate the question.

## HOW "FASCISMO" IS PRONOUNCED

With Mussolini dictator of Italy, Fascismo is the national policy of Italy.

Fascismo is another name for autocracy. It is the philosophy that the state is supreme; that the individual is subordinate to the state. It is pronounced "Fahshezz-mo," with accent on second syllable.

"Fascista" is one who accepts the philosophy of Fascismo. It is pronounced "Fah-shezz-tah," with accent on second syllable.

"Fascisti" is the plural of Fascista. It is pronounced "Fahshezz-tee," with accent on second syllable.

The word Fascismo is derived from the Latin word "Fasces"—bundles of rods. In Roman antiquity these bundles, usually of birch, were borne before superior magistrates as a badge of their power over life and limb.

## *PAPER OPERATED FOR PROFIT LOSES IDEAL OF JOURNALISM*

New York, Jan. 9.—Money making has supplanted the ideals of journalism and many newspapers are being ruined, in the opinion of Don C. Seitz, former business manager of the New York World.

Writing in the Outlook, he said: "One of the many discoveries that came with the wartime inflation was that profit-making could be made the rule and not the exception in journalism."

This discovery was first made in London by Harmsworth, he says, and most of the English newspapers have become profitable, but of no public use.

**"American newspapers are the properties of individuals, estates, partnerships and close corporations. They are longer owned by their editors. The work is done by hired men, some of whom are paid nearly as well as the owning monitors, though working under a less certain tenure of employment and a more shifting scale."**

The editorials are no longer influential," he said, "because they have no force behind them, no potential purpose, no punch. The study is how to mix milk and water rather than blood and brains. The greater the volume of circulation, the weaker its editorial policy is certain to be, perhaps on the theory that there are just so many more people whose feelings must not be injured. The management seems to believe that it has no editorial direction, instead of glorying in its strength.

"The newspapers have come to be more a convenience than an influence, as a result of the various forces."

## COURTS MAY REACH OUT FOR RUNAWAY WITNESS

Washington, Jan. 9.—The senate judiciary committee has reported favorably Senator Walsh's bill providing penalties for American citizens living abroad who refuse to testify in foreign courts when called upon to do so by American courts.

The bill was drafted following the departure to foreign countries of prominent oil men when the Teapot Dome oil lease was before the courts.

The government charged that a Canadian oil company was a "dummy" organization built up by Liberty bonds to former Secretary of the Interior Fall. Several men who knew the facts left the jurisdiction of American courts.

## 86 MILLION PROFIT SEEN IN RAIL PLAN

Washington, Jan. 9.—The Van Sweringen brothers, promoters of the proposed Nickel Plate railroad merger, stand to profit by over $86,000,000, said Henry W. Anderson, counsel for Chesapeake & Ohio minority stockholders, to the Interstate Commerce Commission.

The attorney presented a list of the methods by which this profit will accrue. The purpose behind the merger is not public service, he said, but large private profits for powerful banking interests.

"The present plan," continued Mr. Anderson, "adds no new road or facilities and no new capital, but proposes an immediate increase in dividends of $8,760,000 annually. The public gets nothing, but pays 10 per cent on the $86,000,000 of profits, and we are told that this is in the public interest."

## WORTH OF FIREMEN IS OFTEN IGNORED

Chicago, Jan. 9.—Writing in the Federation News, published by the Chicago Federation of Labor, "An Old-Time Reporter" defends the plea of Chicago fire fighters for a wage increase of $300 a year.

"In the years as a newspaper reporter that I have 'covered' fires in various cities for many different newspapers, I have seen many acts of heroic conduct on the part of firemen that should entitle them to far more consideration than they receive from their employers—the people of this and other great cities," the reporter writes.

"I have often seen them on a cold winter's night, with the thermometer way below zero, fighting a stubborn fire, with their bodies numbed with cold, covered with ice; part of the time confronting extreme heat which scorched their faces, and part of the time half frozen to death.

"I have been them climb the sides of walls, with flames belching out of windows, to carry up a line of hose, or to save the lives of human beings trapped in a burning building. I have watched them as they fought their way through suffocating smoke to get near the blaze, or to carry out unconscious persons.

"It seems to me that for the work they do, the chances they take, the protection they furnish the public and their general value to the community, it is impossible to overpay members of the Chicago fire department, even though their salaries were doubled."

## GOVERNOR PARDONS MINER

Charleston, W. Va., Jan. 9.—Governor Conley has pardoned Edgar Combs, who was serving a life sentence for the alleged murder of a mine guard during the "march of the miners" in 1921. All others who were convicted in connection with that incident were released on parole and were pardoned long ago. Organized labor petitioned the governor to release Combs, whose wife was injured in a factory while supporting her children.

## CASH REGISTER CO. SOLD

New York, Jan. 9.—A banking firm announced the purchase of the National Cash Register company, Dayton, Ohio. The new owners will issue $60,000,000 worth of stock. The "Cash" has been a family affair from its inception, but since the death of its founder, John H. Patterson, in 1922, efforts have been made to turn it into a stock corporation. The company manufactures 85 per cent of the nation's cash registers. Its existence has been marked by many labor disputes.

## INCOME TAX SECRECY OPPOSED BY NORRIS

Washington, Jan. 9.—Senator Norris gives notice that he will combat a repeal of the publicity section of the income tax law.

The tax bill, with its repeal provision of publicity, has already been passed by the house, but the Norris declaration indicates that a fight awaits it in the senate.

The Nebraska lawmaker insists that the cry for secrecy of income tax returns is not going to be made on the part of interested millionaires to avoid tax payments. He will insist on greater publicity. The special senate committee of which Senator Couzens is chairman, he said, has already shown that "big business," through secrecy of the internal revenue bureau, has been able to avoid the payment of many millions of dollars and that the manipulation in the bureau continues.

He charges that secrecy meant giving to the steel trust about $21,000,000 in tax refunds; to the Gulf oil company, one of the Mellon interests, about $4,000,000; to the aluminum trust, another Mellon interest, about $2,000,000; to the Standard Oil company of California, about $5,000,000, and that the treasury has so handled the returns of the Sinclair Oil company that in the case of that concern of 1916 are not yet closed.

Senator Norris denied that any evidence has been produced to show harm or injury by the present inadequate publicity provision. He said that an examination of the B. R. and P. records would increase the revenue of the government by many thousands of dollars and as many cases.

"There will be a full discussion in the senate of these conditions," he said, "and we will know just what we are voting for when we vote for secrecy. I feel confident that the senate is not going to vote for secrecy for governmental affairs in the face of this record."

## SOLDIERS' BONUS LEGAL

Washington, Jan. 9.—The District of Columbia court of appeals has upheld the soldiers' bonus law. The plea of a New York citizen to enjoin federal compensation to veterans of the world war is denied. Large financial interests opposed the law.

### BLAMES LUXURIES FOR COLDS

Chicago, Jan. 9.—The luxuries of modern living are in large part to blame for the sickness known as the "common cold," which causes more illness annually than any other malady. Dr. Isaac A. Abt said in a report of his investigation of colds.

## NEW BUILDING CHIEF GREETED BY WORKERS

Washington, Jan. 9.—William J. McSorley, new president of the A. F. of L. building trades department, was welcomed into office at a luncheon arranged by trade union officials located in this city. William Green, president of the A. F. of L., was toastmaster.

Short talks were made by several executives, who called attention to the increasing harmony between members of the various A. F. of L. affiliates.

President McSorley was president of the International Lathers' union for 23 years and resigned last year to accept a three-year term in his new office. The building trades department convention changed its laws to extend the term of office of the presidency. As head of the lathers' international Mr. McSorley saw that organization grow from a few scattering locals to a powerful unit that has improved work conditions and build a fine office home in Cleveland.

President McSorley succeeds George F. Hedrick, president of the Brotherhood of Painters, who served one year and declined re-election.

John B. Bell of San Francisco, for 18 years first vice president of the lathers, is the new president of that organization.

### OUT-OF-WORKS IN GERMANY

Berlin, Germany, Jan. 9.—An unemployed army of more than 1,000,000, which is increasing, alarms Germany. With the exception of a brief industrial crisis two years ago, this is the highest number of unemployed ever recorded.

## WOMEN STAND TRUE AGAINST WAGE CUT

Willimantic, Conn., Jan. 9.—The 10-months' strike of 2,600 members of the United Textile Workers against the American Thread company is a fine example of trade union solidarity. More than 80 per cent of the strikers are women.

The company is an English concern. It enjoys a high protective tariff and has made enormous profits. Last year, with only part-time operation, it paid a 10 per cent dividend to stockholders. The strike was caused by an attempt to reduce wages 10 per cent, and a commissary furnish strikers with bare necessities.

The company has a troop of state police to escort the few strikebreakers to their employment—when they are not attempting to intimidate strikers.

When the strike was called, but one-third of these workers were organized. It was this condition that led the company to cut wages. The 100 per cent protective tariff, the manufacturing and the procurement of competent strikebreakers has failed. Efforts of local banks and business men to discourage the strikers has also failed.

### TEAMSTERS RAISE WAGES

San Francisco, Jan. 9.—More than 2,400 organized teamsters will benefit by a new contract which becomes effective the first of next month. Working time is reduced and wages are increased 50 cents a day, with double pay for Sunday and holiday work.

## GOVERNMENT FOR CONCESSIONAIRES

By EDGAR WALLACE
Legislative Committeeman, A. F. of L.

West Virginia is being looted of its splendid natural resources by interests outside of the state, and those interests dominate that state.

Mines and gas wells are owned by great corporations with stockholders and headquarters in New York, Boston, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati.

Some day not in the distant future the gas supply, yes, and the coal supply, will be exhausted; then the black acres on mountain side will be the only indication of a lost opportunity; wrecks of derricks will indicate the site of an exhausted gas well.

In order that the coal supply of West Virginia may be profitably transported long distances to the mills and factories of those who hold the resources of West Virginia as huge concessions, it is a fact generally known that the miners of West Virginia must work for wages far lower than those paid in other mining fields in order to make the market. To that end the government of West Virginia has favored conditions outside that state. The police power has been farmed out to corporations that are permitted to hire private armies to administer the will of the owners of the concessions, in lieu of the law of the land. The people are subjugated by armed mercenaries of the looters of natural resources, with the connivance of a complacent government.

West Virginia is not being developed. It is not even exploited. Extravagant waste prevails everywhere. Coal mine operators in the non-union fields have prepared and widely distributed leaflets in which they boast that they finance and maintain what schools there are in the camps they control.

The fact is, these men—from Boston, New York and other cities outside—own property worth almost all assessable property in the counties where the mines are located. They should be assessed on an amount that would enable the county or state to maintain school and police control, just as authorities of police are maintained in all properly conducted communities. The development of the citizenry of the property must not be left to those who have no interest in the community except to extract the last cent of profit possible, can only justify its power by protecting the immediate and future welfare of the governed.

The people who adopt the challenging motto, "Montani semper liberi" will not always submit while the country they have won from the wilds is bartered to concessionaires from either within or outside the state; nor will they consent to be governed only in the interest of such corporations.

## GREEK CONSTITUTION UPSET BY DICTATOR

Athens, Greece, Jan. 9.—Backed by the military group, General Pangalos has assumed the powers of a dictator and declared the Greek republican constitution null and void.

This is official recognition of actual conditions since last July, when Pangalos practically assumed control of the government. Italian Fascistis, under direction of Mussolini, aided in this attack on democracy. Another factor is the growth of communism in the northern part of Greece.

### COMMUNISTS OUSTED

Toronto, Ontario, Jan. 9.—Charges preferred against 15 communist members of the Commercial Telegraphers' union resulted in their expulsion. They are charged with membership in a Canadian national union. This division is favored by the communist trade union movement.

The communists were tried by the executive board of the union. The verdict declared that no one can remain a member of the union and be false to its declarations.

### LARGE TAX REFUNDS

Washington, Jan. 9.—The government has returned more than $151,000,000 to large taxpayers because of erroneous or illegal tax collections. Secretary of the Treasury Mellon obtained $404,871.52 and John D. Rockefeller $457,870.79 during the fiscal year ended June 30, 1925.

The Mellon refund was based on decisions made years ago by the commissioner of internal revenue, it was stated.

## UNREST OF MID-WEST FARMERS MAY BRING ECONOMIC CHANGE

Washington, Jan. 9.—Unrest in the nation's wheat-growing sections may affect the tariff system and change the nation's economic policy toward agriculture.

Middle west and northwest farmers grow more wheat than can be consumed in this country. The balance is exported. The price of wheat for home consumption is based on the price fixed abroad for the surplus, which comes in competition with foreign wheat.

Low prices the farmer receives, together with high prices he pays for what he buys, has caused dissatisfaction, and many banks have failed.

The farmers seem to be agreed that the government should protect them against the comparatively small surplus forcing down the price of wheat used in this country. They insist that manufacturers be aided by high protective tariffs, and that shipping interests are continually urging a subsidy for this industry. They say that the time for "playing favorites" has passed.

The administration opposes the farmers' policy and intimates that it is price fixing. The farmers reply that it is no more price fixing than the tariff for industrial products.

Reclamation farmers in the far west and northwest also object to the administration's policy toward them. They claim that large numbers have been ruined and that others are facing bankruptcy. Eastern financial interests are opposed to the farmers' plan, while a farmers' bloc in congress is being formed to secure relief.

It is possible that the disputes may be carried into next year's elections, and students of political history recall the agricultural discontent of other days that culminated in the Populist movement and in the Bull Moose party.